



Report to the 29th District Representative Steve Conway

For questions or comments:

Representative Steve Conway

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Dear Friends,

With a new year comes a fresh start for the Legislature. Here in Olympia, I am continuing the progress we have made addressing the issues that affect Washington's working families.

We made great strides forward last year with a Transportation budget that will begin unclogging some of our worst chokepoints and getting our infrastructure on solid ground for future economic growth. We also passed an unprecedented Capital Budget – the budget that funds new construction in our communities like higher education buildings and public works projects. These two budgets will generate over 30,000 new construction jobs that will carry us well into the future.

In spite of these gains, I also hope to resolve many outstanding issues resulting from a huge fiscal deficit and ultimately a budget that decimated the services that many of our most needy and hard-working families need and deserve. I voted against last year's Operating Budget because I couldn't agree to cut over 20,000 families off of Basic Health Care coverage, nor could I agree to cut funding to K-12 education as well as workforce training and higher education. I intend to see that those cuts are restored and to ensure that our biggest key to economic success – our state's hard-working families – are not left behind.

I hope that you will find this newsletter helpful for staying up to date on the latest from Olympia. In return, I'd like to ask for your help in delivering the most effective government for the 29th legislative district. I've included a brief survey that I hope you will fill out and return to me. It is meant to help me gauge what is most important to you, so we can work together to make the 29th – and all of Washington – a great place to live and work for all of us.

Sincerely,

Steve Conway
State Representative
29th Legislative District



Looking Back

The 2003 Legislative Session was the most challenging our state has seen in over a decade. As I mentioned before, there were some positive outcomes and some that still need some work. Here are some of the highlights from that time:

- I was pleased that the 29th District was the recipient of \$5,948,206 for projects such as Springwood Park, Sprinker Skate Park, and Bates Technical College. Additionally, millions more will be spent on improvements and expansion projects at nearby Tacoma Community College and Pierce College. This alone should generate many more jobs locally.

- **Making Prescription Drugs Affordable** After years of fighting for legislation, Washington will finally help reduce the skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs, easing the burden not

only for the sick and elderly, but also for citizens and taxpayers paying exorbitant rates of insurance coverage. This groundbreaking legislation utilizes the state's collective buying power to negotiate lower costs for purchasing pharmaceuticals in bulk. A Preferred Drug List will be created, ensuring the most economical of equally effective drugs is used, all of which is still at the discretion of your doctor, who can still prescribe any drug they feel appropriate.

- **Keeping Boeing** Several important bills designed to keep the Boeing Corporation and subsequent aircraft industry in Washington were crafted during the Special Session. I supported this effort as aircraft manufacturing has been the foundation of family-wage jobs in our State, but I disagreed fundamentally with the effort to achieve this by cutting unemployment benefits. Our unemployment tax system needed reform, but cutting over \$200 million in



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benefits for the unemployed in the construction and seasonal industry was wrong and shortsighted, given the current level of citizens looking for work.

- **Defeating Minimum Wage Roll-backs** Several bills were introduced this session attempting to negate the voter-approved initiative that provides a yearly adjustment to the minimum wage. Supporters of these bills argued it would make Washington more business friendly. Others, like myself, felt we should not undermine an initiative passed by the voters of this state - especially one that helps provide a livable wage to so many families. A sound economy relies not only on a healthy business climate, but also on the people who live and work in the state. A fair wage keeps these families safe and keeps our economy rolling.

Looking Ahead *Hiring Locally - The Off-shoring Epidemic by Corporate America*

Here in Washington, our economy relies on global trade much more than most other states. Consequently, our businesses must compete not only with other Americans, but with other countries. Some businesses keep costs low by off-shoring their work to countries where wages are lower and there are no protections or benefits for workers.

This "race to the bottom" as it's called isn't just isolated to blue-collar, manufacturing jobs. Almost every industry is now susceptible to being shipped overseas, from service centers to high-

skilled computer programming and biotech positions - the driving force behind our region's economic boom of the 90s.

In order to keep Corporate America from becoming Corporate India or China or any other country for that matter, I am supporting a package of bills that will prohibit our state government from hiring overseas, as well as bar companies that off-shore work from bidding on state contracts.

Improving Health Care Accessibility

The cost of health care in our country is at alarming levels, forcing many of us to choose between food or heat or the prescriptions and care we need. For others of us, it isn't even a matter of choice - health care is not available for them or their children.

Some seem to think that when we limit the amount of people on the Basic Health Plan or when we cap the number of individuals who can receive health insurance we are saving money. But that's just not the case. That only forces us to practice emergency medicine which can be exponentially more expensive than practicing preventative medicine. That means restoring the cuts made to the Basic Health Plan last year, increasing the amount of low-income families that can receive health care. We can't climb our way out of recession by leaving some behind.

Another problem we face is large and profitable employers in Washington who rely on our state's basic health plan to subsidize their employees. It is shameful that companies like Wal-Mart with billions of dollars in profit should be able to shift their health care costs to taxpayers by encouraging their employees to sign up for our state's health care program. I plan to introduce legislation that reverses this trend and stops health care handouts to large, profitable corporations.

MILITARY & VETERANS ISSUES

In order to show our respect and appreciation for the job our military and veterans have done and continue to do, I was involved in several pieces of legislation to address their needs last session.

- **Internet Voting**

I sponsored a bill that would authorize a pilot project for military and overseas voters to vote over the Internet. While they serve our country abroad, we should do everything we can to make sure their voice is heard at home.

- **Honoring our Veterans**

I prime sponsored a bill that would name November as Veterans History Month, designated as a time for our citizens to celebrate the contributions our veterans have made to our State. Unfortunately, we ran out of time in the legislative session, but I hope to continue this work next year.

- **Saving Funding for Veteran's Services**

The Governor's original budget had included a \$1,360,000 reduction to veterans' outreach services. At a time when our country asks more from our military personnel, I could not agree to these reductions and fought hard to restore their funding. I'm happy to report that we were successful, and that our veterans will continue to receive the same level of access to state services.

If you would like to receive more information on veteran's services, please contact the Department of Veterans Affairs at 1-800-562-2308 or visit: <http://www.dva.wa.gov/>





Please
place
stamp
here



Rep. Steve Conway
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

What Do You Think?

What is your top concern for our state?

Jobs

Do you know anyone who's lost their job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you worried about losing your job or your health coverage?

☐ Yes ☐ No

What should we do to create jobs?

Better training and retraining for workers

☐ Yes ☐ No

Provide tax incentives to create family-wage jobs

☐ Yes ☐ No

Prevent off-shoring of Washington state jobs

☐ Yes ☐ No

Health care

Do you feel that Washington State citizens should have the right to purchase needed prescription drugs from Canada?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you feel large employers should provide affordable health insurance for their employees?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Education

Do you have children or grandchildren in our public schools?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you worried about your children or grandchildren getting into college, or having the money to pay for tuition?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are these reforms a good idea?

Prevent teacher strikes with binding arbitration

☐ Yes ☐ No

Divert taxpayer money from public schools to charter schools

☐ Yes ☐ No

The State Primary

Which system do you support?

☐ **Modified Blanket Primary, Top Two**

Go To General Election: Voters do not declare their party affiliation when the register to vote, and are permitted to vote for one candidate for each partisan office and are not restricted to voting for candidates from only one major party. The choice each voter makes is not made public record. For each partisan office, the two candidates who receive the most votes appear on the general election ballot, regardless of party affiliation. This approach is used by Louisiana only.

☐ **Open Primary, Private Declaration of Party Affiliation:**

Voters are not required to declare their party affiliation until they vote, when they are given one ballot for the major party they choose. The choice they make as to which party's ballot they select is not made public. This model is used in Montana.

☐ **Do Nothing:**

All candidates would appear on the general election ballot similar to the situation in the recent California recall election.



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I will also be working on ensuring low-cost prescription drugs for our citizens by allowing their purchase from Canada as many other states have recently done. There is no reason why Americans should pay more for the same drug than those in any other country. It will be an uphill battle against a very powerful pharmaceutical lobby, but I believe the fleecing of America's seniors and health care consumers by these companies making huge profits must end.



Looking for discounts on prescription drugs? A new toll-free phone number may be able to help.

The Washington State Legislature created the Pharmacy Connections program to help senior citizens and others take advantage of prescription-drug discounts they may be eligible to receive.

The Senior Information and Pharmacy Connections Line is available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. **Call 1-888-435-3377**

Further information about the Pharmacy Connections program and Washington state's prescription-drug reforms can be found at: www.rx.wa.gov.

Education and Job Training

The best way we can ensure a healthy economy for the future of our state is by investing in the education of our young people and workers. That is why I am working on several bills that will keep and attract the best jobs and brightest minds to Washington.

- One of the best ways to ensure that we bring back the manufacturing jobs that provide family-wage jobs is through "Manufacturing Partnerships." This means bringing business interests and labor groups together to solve differences and work on solutions.
- I am supporting a dedicated fund to support Education funding. By doing so, we can plan for the future by setting aside \$1 billion annually to reduce class size and expand enrollment in early childhood education.
- An economic recovery doesn't mean much if it's a jobless recovery. Too many of our state's workers are still out of a job. To help them get back on solid footing, I am supporting the extension of unemployment benefits for training purposes. We are in the midst of a fundamental shift in our economy – giving workers the skills they need to succeed is vital to pulling out of this recession.

Let's Talk

at the **29th Legislative District Town Hall Meeting**
Saturday, Feb. 21st — 2 pm to 4 pm

at the Lakewood Community Center
9112 Lakewood Dr. SW #121
Tacoma, WA 98499

For Directions: 253-798-4176

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